



# Freedom's Way Heritage Association

Volume 10, No. 1

Spring 2006

Serving 45

Communities in

Massachusetts and

New Hampshire

•Rediscovering the Native  
Landscape

•Inventing the New England  
Landscape

•Shaping the Landscape of  
Democracy

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## 22 MA Communities in Heritage Landscapes Inventory Project

A total of 22 communities in Massachusetts have been selected to participate in the year-long Heritage Landscape Inventory sponsored by FWHA and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR). The purpose of the program is designed to assist communities in identifying special places in their surroundings that they value. A heritage landscape defines the character of a community and reflects its past.

Some communities have unique and often surprising elements such as a "cow pass" or their own "grizzle." The Town of Boxborough was one of the first communities to have a public brainstorming meeting, where residents and town officials gather to list their local special places. The result was a list of over 70 places and things that are considered "places of the heart" by the residents. Examples of heritage landscapes identified in Boxborough include local farms, mills and quarry

sites, two schoolhouses, a special chestnut tree, a stone bridge, an esker, a rookery, open meadows, woodlands, views, scenic roads, a parade route, several ponds, brooks and a swamp.

Of the total list in each town, a team of consultants hired by DCR will visit up to 10 sites judged by the townspeople to be of most value and most at risk. Those sites will be studied in detail and evaluations and recommendations will be provided in the final report. All sites identified by town residents will be included in the final report as well.

An expected outcome of the heritage inventory program is to assist towns in documenting their resources as they manage their planning, zoning and preservation priorities.



The Nashua River Oxbows its way through several central Massachusetts communities — an example of a heritage landscape.

## FWHA Opens Fruitland's Community Treasures Series

FWHA's Marge Darby will be the featured speaker on May 28th at Fruitland's Museum highlighting *Our Enduring Legacy—the Inspiring Landscape*.

FWHA members who come to Fruitland's on May 28 will admitted free all day.

Darby's program, which begins at 4 p.m. will launch a series of six Sunday programs at Fruit-

lands entitled "Community Treasures."

"This program celebrates the many community organizations that deepen appreciation for our rich regional New England heritage and enrich our daily lives," said Maud Ayson, Executive Director of Fruitlands. What better way to start the series than to feature Freedom's Way?"

Darby will talk about our own Nashaway, an area defined by undulating hills that slope toward silent mountains. "There is a great sense of pride and awe in our area," said Darby. "There are secrets, hidden places that some of us hold dear," she said, "all fragile and easily destroyed."

## FWHA's Annual Meeting: Of Eagles and Shakers

Sen. Pam Resor  
received the  
2005 Freedom's  
Way Heritage  
Award at the  
FWHA Annual  
Meeting in Nov.



Shaker Historian Roben Campbell, recent curator and lecturer at Fruitlands Museum, discussed her findings at the FWHA annual meeting. Campbell talked about the lives, thoughts and spirituality of Shaker sisters from her extensive research of their diaries, letters and other manuscripts. She showed examples and excerpts of Shaker writings to illustrate their daily lives and the ultimate decline of the sect.

During FWHA's annual business meeting, Sen. Pam Resor was awarded the 2005 Heritage Award for her work on behalf of several local causes, including the preservation of the historic Shirley Shaker village, the closing of the unsafe Route 2 rest area in Harvard, and the establishment of a Massachusetts Freedom's Way Heritage Area. The award is a crystal eagle in flight, the FWHA distinctive logo.

At FWHA's 2005 Annual Meeting in November, (left to right) FWHA Board Member Jerry Van Hook, of Arlington, Zelda Moore of Ayer, FWHA Board Member-Mary Shasta of Harvard, FWHA President Mary H. Whitney of Fitchburg & Sen. Pam Resor.

## Freedom's Way Heritage Association

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Mary Shasta, Treasurer

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Board Member Emeritus

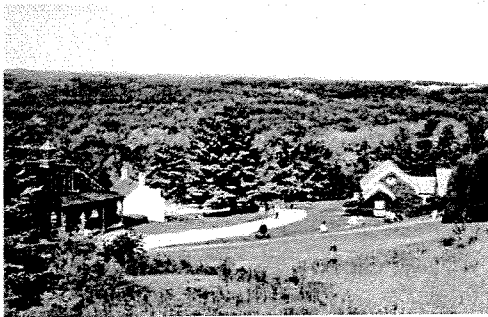
Milly Chandler,  
Advisory Council,  
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Freedom's Way Heritage Association Serves the Communities of Acton, Arlington, Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Clinton, Concord, Dunstable, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hudson, Lancaster, Leominster, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lunenburg, Malden, Maynard, Medford, Pepperell, Princeton, Shirley, Sterling, Stow, Sudbury, Townsend, Westford, Westminster, Winchendon and Woburn in Massachusetts. Amherst, Brookline, Greenville, Hollis, Mason, Milford, Nashua and New Ipswich in New Hampshire.

## Fruitlands Museum View May be Changed



Fruitlands Museum current viewshed  
in Harvard, MA

By Pam Durrant  
A proposed pharmaceutical manufacturing plant at Devens in Massachusetts forces us to realize how fragile our treasured landscapes are and to focus on how best to preserve these landscapes while recognizing the value and economic benefits to Massachusetts and the regional New England Community such development brings. Fruitlands' historic viewshed encompasses Shabkin, Mt Wachusett, Mt. Monadnock and the pack Monadnocks of New Hampshire.

This is the same 50-mile view that Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management designated as "distinctive" in its 1982 Massachusetts Landscape Inventory, *A Survey of the Commonwealth's Scenic Areas*. Distinctive landscapes, areas of highest visual quality, make up about 4% of the Commonwealth.

A National Register Historic District and National Historic Landmark, Fruitlands is a regional museum, established in 1915 by Clara

(Continued on next page)

## President's Message

We are a regional entity formed to help communities identify and celebrate their natural, historical and cultural heritage. We are a clearing-house to help you connect to each other, to bring your issues and concerns to like-minded people within our area. There is strength in numbers and what may seem insurmountable for one town alone, can be more easily addressed within the region.

Each of us is justifiably proud of our own city or town, the role it played in strengthening our evolving democratic principles, the emergence of the conservation movement, and the contributions of our citizens toward innovation and their visions for a brighter future. A myriad of subjects relating to our themes connect our communities in ways that we continue to explore. The work is as much fun as it is educational.

We are working now to build in our region the same sense of pride we have for our individual cities and towns by connecting their stories. The Amherst story, an article in this issue, is an example of a history to which each of us can relate. How many of our towns were bypassed by rail development? Or felt the loss of manufacturing? Let us have your story, connect it to our themes – let us know how your town reacted to the Alarm in 1776. As

part of this heritage effort, we are partnering with Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation to identify some of our towns heritage landscape. For those of you who didn't make this year's cut, and for the New Hampshire towns that could not participate in a Massachusetts program, stay tuned. We have begun talks about how we might help you, so if you would like to join that effort call the office and sign up! Another one of our primary functions is to help you resolve issues in a spirit of cooperation not confrontation. We will not take sides in a parochial argument, but we will help you resolve yours. Last spring, we acted as facilitators to bring to the table the people most concerned about the problems of the Shirley Shaker Village. Still ongoing, we brought together our legislators, (Senator Resor and Rep Eldridge) local museum officials, local residents, state heritage officials, and the prison officers to discuss and talk about mutual concerns and how we might accomplish change by helping to prevent more deterioration of the Shaker Village buildings and find ways to mitigate the night lighting so offensive to the region.

We took a stand to help Fruitlands Museum find ways to protect its viewscape, an integral part of that museum's focus as a regional treasure. While we did not totally suc-

ceed, we supported the museum's stand and in so doing may have helped to win some assistance and negotiating opportunity for them. This too is an ongoing effort.

With the help once again of Senator Resor and Rep. Jamie Eldridge, we joined with the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Harvard, the Johnnie Appleseed Trail, several citizens groups and MassDevelopment to ask the highway department to close the Route 2 Rest area and abandon its plans for a 24 hour facility there. This was a success.

We began annual area bike and walking tours – the next will be on October 28th. Save the date!

We also co-sponsored another Dr. Ed. Bell Forum with the Littleton Conservation Trust about Strategies for Retaining Small Town Character.

Sign up to join us with any of our efforts, and make a contribution, we are entirely dependent upon you – no one else funds or supports us except our membership.

*Mary H. Whitney*

Mary H. Whitney  
President



*"One of our  
primary  
functions is to  
help you resolve  
issues in a spirit  
of cooperation  
not  
confrontation"*

## Fruitlands View

*(Continued from Previous Page)*

Endicott Sears and set on a spectacular open green corridor abutting Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge (US Fish & Wildlife) and the Nashua River Valley. Fruitlands's inspiring 210-acre landscape includes several historic buildings, a trail system and 150 acres of woodlands, swamps and meadows, encompassing colonial sites, pre-historic glacial lakes, successional forests and endangered wildlife habitat.

A preservationist pioneer, early environmentalist, collector and museum visionary, Sears envisioned Fruitlands as a place for education, contemplation and reflection. Fruitlands' landscape and

viewshed are integral to Fruitlands' mission and are preserved and shared as a "fifth collection."

Fruitlands Museum is taking an active role in the design and the community impact review processes in order to ensure that the buildings' siting, design and landscaping minimize the visual impact to this cherished and historic landscape.

*(Photo courtesy of Fruitlands Museum)*

## Amherst, New Hampshire --- "Somewhere in Time"

By Will Ludt

Nestled in southern Hillsborough County, about 12 miles west of Nashua, is the small but prosperous community of Amherst, NH. The land where Amherst sits was originally granted by the General Court of Massachusetts, Province of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, to soldiers who served in the Narragansett Indian Wars of 1675-76. A charter for the town government was granted by King George II of England in 1760. Amherst was named in honor of General Sir Jeffrey Amherst, who was commander-in-chief of British armies in North America during the French and Indian War. Named as the county seat for Hillsborough in 1769, Amherst became the center of business, economics, and judicial-political matters. Numerous industries made Amherst their home--iron foundries, mills, a brick yard, a buggy whip factory, three newspapers, and half a dozen inns, taverns and stores were all located in early Amherst.

Amherst thrived as a business center for the region until several significant negative economic factors in the early to mid 1800's served to shift business development away. The Industrial Revolution passed Amherst by with industry moving to neighboring towns where water power and resources were abundant. In addition, the railroad by-passed the town on its outskirts, forcing local commerce to relocate. The final blow came when the county seat moved to Nashua. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main east-west highway (Route 101) still passed through the town but in the 1970's the road was straightened and again the village was bypassed. The overall result of these changing economic and transportation factors was that the center of Amherst was left a pristine, mainly residential center of period Colonial, Federal, and Victorian-era homes and public buildings. The Amherst Historic District was established in 1972 and in 1981 over 250 contributing homes and structures were identified and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Our current population is about 12,500.



VIEW OF  
AMHERST  
TOWN  
HALL  
FROM  
PIERCE  
LANE

Amherst has four important entities which continue to strive to maintain the unique rural character and village setting of a New England town, the Amherst Heritage Commission and Historic District Commission, the Historical Society of Amherst, and multiple civic, non-profit organizations dedicated to preserving the town and its environment.

*Amherst was  
named in honor  
of General Sir  
Jeffrey Amherst,  
who was  
commander-in-  
chief of British  
armies in North  
America during  
the French and  
Indian War.*

The Historical Society of Amherst, founded in 1957, strives to study, record the history of the town, arrange for the safeguarding of artifacts and records by digitizing society holdings (over 700 digitized artifacts on line at [www.hsanh.com](http://www.hsanh.com)), and maintain two museums, the Wigwam and the Chapel Museums. The Historical Society sponsors our annual "Antiques on the Green" Show and Sale in mid-September with over 50 antique dealers selling high quality antiques and collectibles. All proceeds go to our annual scholarship fundraising and toward activities geared to preserve Amherst's rich heritage.

The Amherst Historic District Commission is a body appointed by the Selectman to regulate exterior alterations to buildings and settings with the goal of protecting and maintaining the historic character of the historic district.

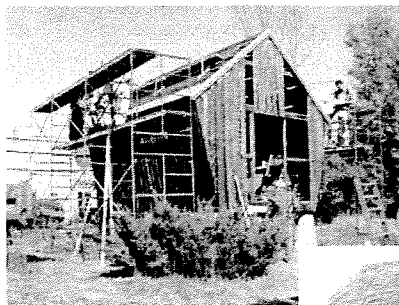
The Amherst Heritage Commission was established by the town in an effort to educate the public on historic and cultural resources and assist town Planning Boards, the Conservation Commission, and the Historic

District Commission in areas that address the protection of historic resources. Follows are several key events or projects that are examples that the Heritage Commission has undertaken in the past and present.

### *Parker Farm Corn Crib*

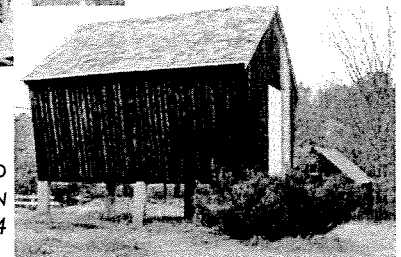
The Commission completed the restoration of a historic circa 1860 corn crib on Baboosic Road. Community organizations and private donors worked with the Commission to raise funds to cover the cost of materials. The work was performed by the

North Bennet Street  
School preservation  
carpentry department.



NORTH  
BENNET STREET  
SCHOOL  
WORK IN PROGRESS

COMPLETED  
CORN CRIB RESTORATION  
OCTOBER, 2004

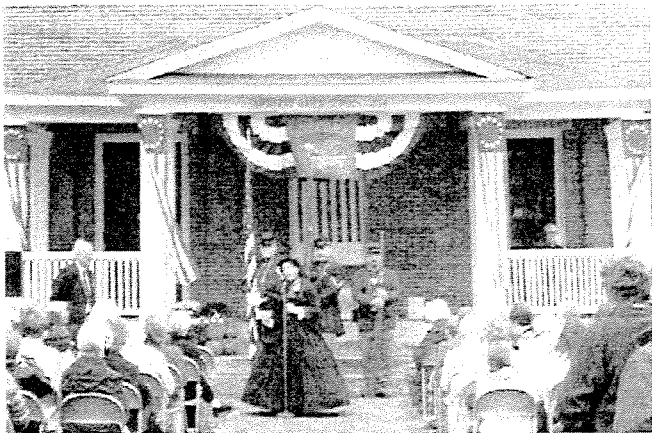


The corn crib, once part of the old Parker farm, was deeded an easement from a local developer to the building and surrounding land that gave rights to the town to "maintain, repair, improve and otherwise preserve, protect and care for the Corncrib." The Corn Crib is one of only a handful of similar farm structures to survive in New Hampshire.



### 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Amherst's Brick School

The celebration took place on October 16, 2004 on the grounds of the Amherst Brick School. Over 150 people were in attendance. Those attending were treated to a program which included: ringing of the Brick School bell to open the ceremony;



MRS. BETSEY PHELPS (1812-1890) & 5<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT NH VOLUNTEERS

posting of the colors by the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers; a memorable glimpse into 19<sup>th</sup> century Amherst life by professional historical impersonator Sharon Woods, who portrayed Mrs. Betsey Phelps, an Amherst resident of the time of the Brick School's founding and mother of Sgt Charles Phelps who died from wounds received at the Battle of Gettysburg; selections from the Town Band; special presentation of an original Brick School watercolor to the Superintendent of Schools; personal reminiscences from those attending the Brick School; singing of "Auld Lang Syne," and a cake cutting ceremony honoring the oldest and youngest persons attending the Brick School. After the ceremony, attendees were invited into the Brick School Community Room for refreshments and the viewing of a collection of memorabilia from years past of the Brick School.



BRICK SCHOOL GRADUATES & ATTENDEES  
(1928 THRU 1998)

### Town Hall Old Burial Ground

The Commission worked with the Historic District Commission to develop a landscape design to enhance the exterior of the Town Hall. Phase 1 will entail initial plantings and hard landscaping to cover the transformer. Phase 2 will provide grass and granite curbing six feet in front of the existing fence to preserve the area. Phase 3 will improve safety and access to the newly preserved Town Hall. Phase 3 will increase safety, potentially bury utility and power lines, and maintain parking space. The Commission has worked with town organizations to secure funds to reduce overall expenses to the Town Hall project.

### Historic Resources Survey

Plans to conduct a town-wide survey to record and document all historic resources is underway. Examples of historic resources may include: houses, barns, stone walls, bridges, etc. The commission has submitted applications for grants and has received private donations for supplies, photography equipment, and recording media that will be used for accurately documenting and archiving our historic resources.

### 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Initial efforts are underway for the celebration in the year 2010. Town civic organizations and private citizen are currently planning activities for the event.

Amherst is blessed with multiple civic organizations, non-profits, and town commissions which are dedicated to the preservation of Amherst's way of life. The Villagers and Nipmug chapters of Questers have donated time and thousands of dollars to the preservation of our character. The Amherst Junior Women and Amherst Garden Club are but a few organizations who contribute to make Amherst a special place to live. The town is indebted to all of their efforts.

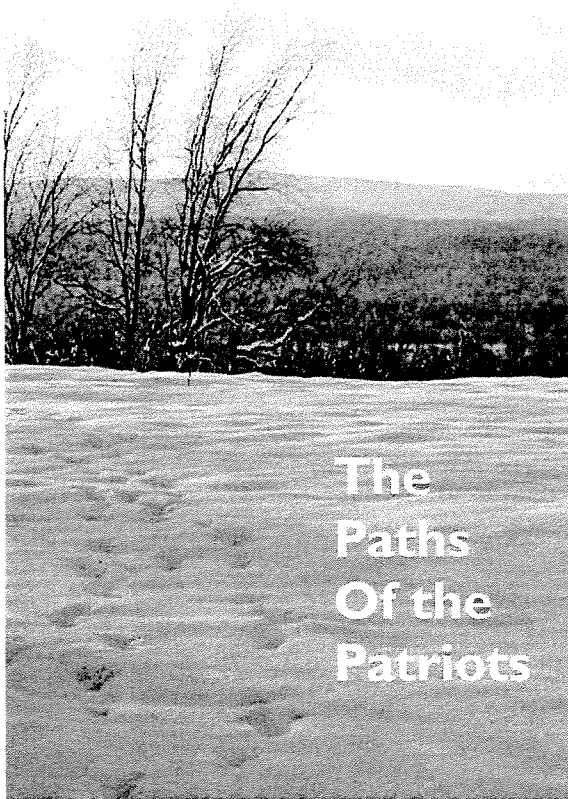
Anyone wishing to know more about Amherst, please contact Will Ludt, board member of FVHA, at 603-673-1072 or [wludt52@aol.com](mailto:wludt52@aol.com). We would love to have you come for a visit!

Amherst, NH  
is one of the latest  
communities  
to join Freedom's  
Way. Their  
rich history  
makes it  
a great fit!



Welcome  
Amherst!

Sources of Information and Photos: "History of the Town of Amherst, Hillsborough County New Hampshire, 1883", D.F. Secomb; "Walking Tour of Amherst Village", R. Rowe; Excerpts from "Welcome to the Colonial Village of Amherst, New Hampshire"; "Amherst- A Commemorative History", 1760-1960 Bicentennial Committee- updated in 1976; Excerpts from the Historical Society of Amherst Antiques on the Green September 17, 2005 Brochure; Town Report- 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brick School Celebration; Transportation Enhance (TE) Program Application, 2005.



Freedom's Way has been collecting data to document and map the sites and stories of Revolutionary War. This regional history of the documents from the Committees of Correspondence; the local stories of how the Alarm was spread and received by as far away as Hollis, Gardner, or Amherst; how General Washington and his officers managed to build a successful army out of ordinary citizens; and the local stories of war service and sacrifice is very inspiring.

Our immediate goal is to build a usable database from the Association's collected files. Two students from the Shriver Job Corps come to our offices three days a week and enter the pertinent data into computers. Assisting them is a student from the town of Harvard Public Schools. They check and double check each other, email or call liaisons to verify and identify sites and stories. Their work is the foundation for what will become a Freedom's Way self-tour and on-line history guide. Once we have sufficient data we hope to partner with a graduate school program where GIS students will map the sites and carry the project to another level.

We are grateful to the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati for contributing toward the cost of some of the graphics work. The design for an interactive map and accompanying background literature are complete, thanks to the Society and the work of Richard Perkins, graphic designer for ICON inc. Many, many thanks also to Pamela Smith for her encouragement and her understanding about how the landscape holds the key to teaching history.

If you think kids hate history – come and see our students at work. They enjoy digging for facts and remind us that history is best taught by discovery.

Photo courtesy of Gail Bloom

## The Story of Boad: A Piece of Mason, New Hampshire Lore

*"Boad brought  
the cattle to  
graze on Nose  
Meadow"*

In January, the Mason, NH Historical Society announced a fundraising campaign to honor local children's author and illustrator Twig Jones by commissioning a life-sized statue of Boad, reportedly the first non-native American to visit and build a camp in Mason. Local Mason artist and FWHA liaison to Mason Liz Fletcher was asked to design the statue.

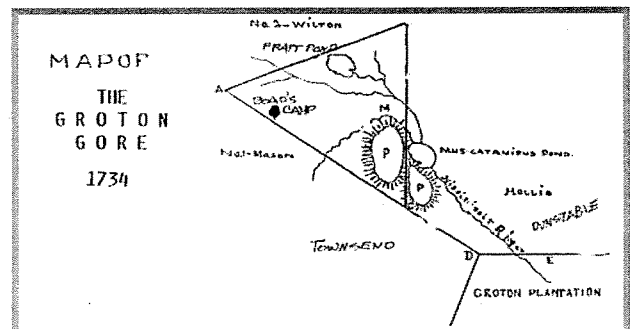
Twig, a founding member of the Mason Historical Society discovered the story of Boad during research of the Groton Parish records and frequently recounted the story to Mason schoolchildren. Boad was a black slave who each season drove cattle to a natural meadow in what was then an uninhabited part of Groton, now part of Mason, NH.

Elizabeth O. Jones wrote a chant in honor of Boad that begins as follows:

*In 1734.*

*They added to Groton the Groton Gore.  
They sent up a young black slave named Boad.  
Not a house here then, not a single road.  
On paths through the deep woods, spotted with shadow,  
Boad brought the cattle to graze on Nose Meadow.  
Green was this meadow, lush was the grass;  
The woods full of sweet fern and sassy-frass,  
And gigantic trees and pretty wild flowers,  
Moss-covered rocks and prickly briars, r the rising sun.*

Donations can be made to the Mason Historical Society Boad Fund, 16 Darling Hill Rd. Mason, NH 03048.



Boad's Camp now near the Mann House in Mason, NH

# WELCOME WELCOME WELCOME

Freedom's Way recently welcomed new board members and community liaisons:

**Hugh Field** joined the FWHA board in January and has strong ties to Shirley with his family farm, Valley Farm. The Fields sponsor annual nature walks at Valley Farm, including the annual Benton MacKaye hike.

**Chuck French** is the liaison to the town of Bedford and was active in the Lexington Historical Society for 25 years. He is active in regional historical projects such as Historic New England and FWHA.

**David Kelland** is the liaison to town of Lexington and has served on the Lexington Historical Commission since 1983 and as Chair since 1994. He is a retired physicist (MIT) and taught at Simmons and Emmanuel Colleges.

**Meredith Marciniwicz** is the liaison to the town of Shirley and is the volunteer curator of Shirley Historical Society. She is active in many community activities in Shirley.

## A Book Review

# 1776

By David McCullough

Reviewed by Milly Chandler

If only our American History schoolbooks had been written by McCullough!

Whether you are reading "1776" or listening to McCullough's recording of the book, that year will come alive as you visualize the American and British armies and navies in Boston, Brooklyn, Fort Washington and Trenton.

You will know the doubts and anxieties of General Washington and his staunch brigadiers, as they look at the rabble gathered from Massachusetts and wonder how long it would take to establish the

order and demeanor of a real army. One may sense the weather, hear the cannon-fire, and smell the dirty ragged clothing and the latrines.

Washington, who had never led an army in battle, chose Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island, a full-time soldier for only six months, as one of his generals. Greene, had never set foot on a battlefield, but he had taught himself military strategy by reading

books on current military tactics and was determined to become a "fighting Quaker." His close friend, Henry Knox, a Boston bookseller, joined in this self-taught military experience.

Most thrilling is Knox's saga of transporting 58 cannon from Fort Ticonderoga by boat down Lake

George, crossing the Hudson River four times, to load onto 42 sledges drawn by 80 yoke of oxen, across Massachusetts to fortify Dorchester Heights thus causing the British to evacuate Boston.

McCullough describes the personalities of Washington and those closest to him with vivid detail

drawn from diaries, correspondence and documents filed on both sides of the Atlantic.

These cite the fears and doubts of the heroes we herald today. By revealing the deep desire for independence following the declaration, McCullough reminds us of the courage and strength it took to endure hardships in that "Glorious cause."

*One may sense  
the weather,  
hear the cannon-  
fire and smell the  
dirty ragged  
clothing and the  
latrines.*

## Become A Member

☐ Renewal    ☐ New Membership

### Annual Membership Categories

- ☐ Individual \$35
- ☐ Family/Nonprofits/Community \$50
- ☐ Business Roundtable \$100

### Supporting Membership Categories

- ☐ Minuteman \$250-\$499
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- ☐ Golden Eagle \$5,000 & up

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*Important for email newsletter and other FWHA info*

**Thank You!** We operate entirely with volunteers giving their time and resources. Your contribution will help to create and foster our National Heritage. Freedom's Way is a 501(C) 3 non-profit organization and, as such, your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Mail with your check made out to FWHA:  
To FWHA, 100 Sherman Avenue, Suite 2; Devens, MA 01434

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## Ask Freedom's Way

Our Heritage Landscapes Inventory project underscores how much our communities share such as waterways, viewsheds, trails, forests, great meadows, resting places, etc.

But we also find many communities have unique features that are well known and treasured locally but may puzzle outsiders. Since modern dictionaries don't always help us figure things out to our satisfaction, we came up with definitions that may or may not be correct. You'll tell us if we are wrong.

Here, then is a heritage landscapes glossary.

**Cow pass:** a place made literally for cows to pass. They are usually land depressions in which the cows must walk in sedate order and some passes are under roads. Boxborough has several cow passes.

**Esker:** Formed by glaciers, eskers are snake-shaped ridges of glacial deposits left by receding waters. Traveling Native Americans often used eskers during wet seasons because they were higher than surrounding areas.

**Grizzle:** Technically, grizzle means gray or partly gray. A second definition is to whine or grumble or fret. Here is our guess – when we refer to something as a person's "folly" we mean

a foolish undertaking, a plan gone awry or destined to go awry. *Bartholomew's Grizzle* in Concord was the name for the place that Bartholomew fretted over. Such as in, "Dang, I keep trying, but I can't get anything to grow over there!" We put this into the same language category as an "oozy," -- when you step into one, you know why it was given that name.

**Kame:** A short ridge or mound that resulted from melting glacial ice that formed rivers of melt-water with slightly higher banks on the sides. Kame terraces are the areas where the sandy deposits built up along the sides of the banks. Related, kettle holes are places where ice water melted to form deep rounded depressions. Walden Pond is a kettle hole. Similarly, a chasm is a very deep depression, gap or gorge, such as Tophet's Chasm in Littleton.

**Town Pound:** Opinions vary on the meaning of this expression. Some people also call the town pound a magazine, such as where ammunition was stored. Or a town pound also refers to a small enclosure built to contain wandering farm animals until the owners could claim them, sometimes for a fee. Many towns have remnants of pounds and some even have both pounds and magazines.